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The practical result of the performance, probably based on an acoustic principle that is beyond the range of my own knowledge, is that the length of the slit is made equal to the exterior circumference of the gong.

A fowl is killed and given, together with a live pig, as payment to the magician, and tidings are sent round to all the Vao villages announcing what has been done, the messengers taking with them to each village a message-yam decorated with croton leaves together with a single killed pig for which, being for food only, no sacrificial signal is sounded. This pig is called *masoamp*, a word of which I did not enquire the exact meaning, but is probably compounded from *mas*, meaning "provisions," and *oamp*, which, when applied in the form of *tamat-oamp* to the ghosts of men slain in battle, indicates absence of mortuary rites, in this case represented by the absence of the sacrificial signal. This pig is probably made the occasion of a *masean* feast, being one for which the recipients have not previously worked.

Skilled gong-makers hollow out the gongs, which are surrounded by a screen.

Skilled workers are now called for to assist in hollowing out the gongs. I will call them the gong-makers. These may be taken from any village and from either "line." Usually those who have previously worked at successful gongs are chosen.

A screen, called *na-lit*, is built inside the *ghamal*, and no one may enter it except those who are working on the gongs. Once the work has been started it must not be discontinued from sunrise to sundown, and to maintain this standard the workers are organised into shifts. When any one shift gets tired the workers composing it come out from behind the screen into the *ghamal* while the next shift takes up the uninterrupted work. While resting, the gong-makers are supplied with magnificent puddings. Not until nightfall may the work cease, and it must be resumed again before sunrise on the following morning. From the time the work is begun until the gongs are finished none of the workers may leave the *ghamal*, except only to relieve nature.

Restrictions imposed during hollowing out.

During this time no person of the home-village, man or woman, may have any sexual connexion, nor may they step over the buttress root of a *gha-tambol* tree, nor drink water, nor may they eat fish, nor the fruit of the *tawò* tree, nor anything that is roasted on stones. If yams are to be roasted the greatest care must be taken that there are no stones in the place where the fire is made. At the beginning of this period the list of these restrictions is publicly announced by the magician. All those subject to them are said to be *vel-val*, a word meaning "sacred" or "taboo." [1]

[1] See p. 400.

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dead man can pass through the cave into the land of the dead, where he will be re-born into a new life after death. This doubtless explains Godefroy's statement that in Vao, as in Santo, the designs were formerly drawn by women. Among the Tamils of South India designs in some cases almost identical with those from Malekula are drawn by living Hindu women before the thresholds of their houses in the month when the sun dies and is re-born, and the designs are straightway walked over by their husbands.[1] A more classical instance is Vergil's account at the beginning of the *Sixth Aeneid* of how Aeneas, seeking to visit his father Anchises in Hades, first has to visit the female sibyl who guards the entrance, near which is a painted representation of the Cretan labyrinth, and of the well-known events connected with it.[2] Nearer home still are the Celtic stone crosses, symbols of re-birth, with their entangling designs. Rather later in time are the labyrinth designs executed on the floor of the nave or over the west door of many mediaeval Gothic churches, and the turf mazes which the village boys run round in our own country,[3] while today in parts of Scotland and north England women draw what in the north are called "tangled thried" designs on their thresholds and hearthstones as a prophylactic against evil influences or witches.[4]

Psychological significance: "Dream-walking" on Vao.

From this brief summary it will be seen that the labyrinth has a long cultural history. But it would not persist in so many places if it had not also a deep psychological significance. Many people have labyrinthine dreams in which they try to prove the mysteries of life. Somnambulistic phenomena also are often of this nature. Nor are such things confined to our own culture.

Godefroy describes a culturally recognised condition of dream-walking on Vao called *rel pul*, words which mean literally walking (*rel*) in a dream (*pul*).[5] He describes it as "walking in a dream, or rather a dream-state induced while a man walks about, which lasts all day long. I have a strong suspicion that the *rel pul* is a ritual act, since the dreamer must be in a state of fast beginning the evening before; he does not speak, he goes alone, with a switch in his hand, sits down from time to time, and if a friend joins him, such words as pass between them must be spoken in a very low voice. A man who is doing *rel pul* is never criticised nor regarded as being lazy (*nime mat-mat*, 'having the hands dead,' i.e. paralysed), as are those who stay behind on Vao doing nothing instead of going with all the rest to work in the mainland gardens."[6]

[1] Layard, 7, p. 124.
[2] See Knight. Till the publication of the Malekulan evidence this passage had remained a puzzle to scholars. Mr. Knight was the first to explain it.
[3] See Matthews. [4] See Banks, p. 78.
[5] Compare Atchin *por-por*, Mota *qore*(*-qore*), both meaning "to dream."
[6] Godefroy, 1, 1934, p. 210.